

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6092

BILL NUMBER: HB 1069

NOTE PREPARED: Nov 29, 2011

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: County Coroners.

FIRST AUTHOR: Rep. Bacon

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: As Introduced

FUNDS AFFECTED: ☒ **GENERAL**
☒ **DEDICATED**
☐ **FEDERAL**

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill requires that all deaths that occur in a county be reported to the county coroner. The bill requires the Coroner's Training Board to prescribe a form to assist a county coroner in determining whether to investigate a death reported to the coroner.

The bill also provides that a coroner is not required to follow certain organ and tissue procurement procedures if the coroner determines that the procurement will impede or interfere with a death investigation.

Effective Date: July 1, 2012.

Explanation of State Expenditures: The bill would require the Coroner's Training Board to develop a form that would assist a county coroner in determining whether to investigate a medical death. Resources to develop and distribute the form should be available within the current level of appropriations available to the Board. (Currently, the Coroner's Training Board is housed within the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute (ICJ), which handles the Board's necessary administrative tasks, charging back expenses to the Board.)

Explanation of State Revenues:

Background Information: The Board is funded through the dedicated, nonreverting Coroner's Training and Continuing Education fund. Currently, if a local health department makes a charge for a certificate of death, a \$1.75 Coroner's Continuing Education Fee must be added to the established rate. The fund received total revenue of \$788,062 in FY 2010, \$691,437 in FY 2011, and had received \$34,712 as of November 14, 2011.

Explanation of Local Expenditures: The bill requires that all deaths are to be reported to the coroner. The

bill would further allow the coroner to determine which deaths should be investigated and provides for the development of a form to assist coroners in making this determination.

According to the Board's web site, approximately 12% of all deaths are reported to the coroners. This provision may increase staffing hours due to increased administrative and investigation time. The cost is currently indeterminate as it would be on a county-by-county basis and would depend on the information determined to be necessary on the form developed by the Board. While the Coroner's Training Board staff reported that this provision would have a significant fiscal impact on the county coroners offices, the cost would depend on the specific information to be included on the form developed by the Board, the extent to which staffing hours might be increased in each county in order to address the increased calls, and the extent to which each county coroner would investigate additional cases.

Background Information: Current law requires the coroner to be notified when a person has died from violence; has died by casualty; has died when apparently in good health; has died in an apparently suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner; or has been found dead. Coroners also are involved in the natural deaths of persons who do not have a physician to sign a death certificate, deaths of inmates while incarcerated, and deaths of persons who died of a disease that might constitute a public health threat. Coroners also review deaths of people who are to be cremated, buried at sea, transported out of state, or otherwise unavailable for pathological examination. Deaths not reported to the coroner are considered medical deaths (i.e., the deceased individual, due either to age or medical status, was expected to die, and a primary physician signs off on the cause of death). For medical deaths the primary physician usually has personal knowledge of the deceased and knows their medical history as well as access to the medical records to assist in the determination of the cause of death.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: Coroner's Training Board, ICJ.

Local Agencies Affected: Coroner's Offices.

Information Sources: Auditor's Data, Revenue Trial Balance as of January 16, 2009, Indiana Handbook of Taxes, Revenues, and Appropriations, Indiana Legislative Services Agency, FY 2008.

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